Council Highlights: October, 1999

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COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS is intended to provide quick updates on issues of interest to members and affiliates of the Council of Ontario Universities (COU). It is produced regularly throughout the academic year.

This issue covers the month of July, August and September 1999.

Surge in demand at top of Council agenda

September 27 marked the traditional fall retreat of Executive Heads to discuss major issues and establish strategic priorities for the academic year. Topping this year's agenda was the issue of the surge in enrolment, which could see as many as 90,000 additional students seeking university opportunities over the next decade.

Dianne Cunningham, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, along with senior members of her staff joined in the morning portion of the retreat, where Executive Heads updated the Minister on the status of many initiatives being undertaken by Ontario universities to help address priority areas in higher education, including closer co-operation with colleges; expansion of programs where shortages have been identified; performance indicators on employment, earnings and skills match; and enhancing the use of technology in university teaching.

Key among the issues discussed were this year's increases in first-year enrolments of approximately 6.6%. The increases and associated implications were the focus of the October 8 Council meeting and a press conference held the same day. The press conference was well attended by both print and broadcast media and resulted in extensive coverage. Further details will follow in the next issue of the COU newsletter, *For the Record*.

COU commissions two new studies

COU recently commissioned two studies, one on quality indicators and one on university faculty labour markets.

The first study, *Quality Indicators and Quality Enhancement in Universities: Experiences in Other Jurisdictions*, will examine the effectiveness of indicators being used in other jurisdictions including the United Kingdom, Australia, other Canadian provinces and American states viewed as leaders in the use of such indicators.

A second study, *The Prospective Labour Market for University Faculty: Implications for Ontario*, will identify approaches used in other jurisdictions to respond to tighter labour markets, as well as identify the employment conditions that influence the attractiveness to prospective faculty.

Both COU studies, which will be made public when completed in early 2000, will be conducted by Dr. David Smith, former Principal of Queen's University and former Chair of the government-appointed Advisory Panel on Future Directions for Postsecondary Education.

Working Group on University Research created

A joint Working Group on University Research, comprising senior representatives from government and universities, has been formed to provide advice to government on ways to support basic and applied research in all disciplines of Ontario's universities to further their

economic, educational, social and cultural missions.

The Working Group, co-chaired by Ken Knox, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Energy, Science and Technology, and Dr. Ian Clark, President of COU, will:

- review the findings of a study by Prof. Heather Munroe-Blum, University of Toronto, on the role of postsecondary research in the broader innovation strategy of the province;
- recommend ways to increase Ontario's share of research funding from national granting councils and other federal bodies;
- recommend ways to improve and strengthen existing Ontario programs in support of university research;
- recommend ways to encourage knowledge transfer from university research; and
- act as a sounding board for potential government initiatives that could affect university research.

Its government members are:

- Dr. Bruce Archibald, Assistant Deputy Minister, Science and Technology Division, Ministry of Energy, Science and Technology;
- Brad Graham, Assistant Deputy Minister (Acting), Integrated Policy and Planning Division, Ministry of Health;
- Phil Howell, Assistant Deputy Minister, Office of Economic Policy, Ministry of Finance;
- David Trick, Assistant Deputy Minister, Postsecondary Education, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Its university members are:

- Dr. William Bridger, Vice-President, Research, The University of Western Ontario, and Chair, Ontario Council on University Research (OCUR)
- Dr. Peter George, President, McMaster University
- Dr. Frederick Gilbert, President, Lakehead University
- Dr. William Leggett, Principal, Queen=s University
- Prof. Robert Prichard, President, University of Toronto
- Dr. Robert Roseheart, President, Wilfrid Laurier University
- Dr. Mordechai Rozanski, President, University of Guelph
- Dr. Michael Stevenson, Vice-President, Academic Affairs and Provost, York University
- Dr. Richard Van Loon, President, Carleton University

Task Force on University Advancement submits report

In an effort to heighten public awareness of major issues in higher education, the Task Force on University Advancement, chaired by Dr. Ross Paul, President of the University of Windsor, was established this summer to:

- identify the challenges and opportunities associated with increasing the level of public awareness and support for higher education in Ontario;
- suggest ways to make greater use of existing university instruments for alumni relations, communications and development, and to propose new initiatives to engage alumni;
- identify areas and specific initiatives in which collective action is desirable or warranted and which organization would be best placed to co-ordinate such action; and
- propose specific initiatives such as seminars, media events to further the interests and objectives of the collective, individuals and groups therein.

Its members are Dr. Ian Clark, President, COU; David Estok, Director of Public Affairs, University of Western Ontario; Darlene Frampton, Director of Public Affairs, University of Guelph; Dr. Catherine Henderson, President, Ontario College of Art & Design; Dr. Bruce Muirhead, Professor of History and Academic Colleague, Lakehead University; Bonnie Patterson, President, Trent University; Gary Smith,

Vice-President, Advancement, York University; Arthur Stephen, Vice-President, Advancement, Wilfrid Laurier University; and Arnice Cadieux, Executive Director of Public Affairs, COU.

The Task Force met on three occasions (August 16, September 14, September 21) and, as a result, developed a proposal that outlined an overall goal and approach, defined its complementary messages and suggested mechanisms to deliver these messages. The report was reviewed by Council at its October 8 meeting.

Working Group on Post-Diploma Degrees

In June 1999, the Working Group on Post-Diploma Degrees, chaired by Dr. Rowland Smith, Vice-President, Academic, Wilfrid Laurier University, was established to examine the development of a general framework for post-diploma programs. The Working Group will focus on ways of articulating entry into general BA or BSc programs for students who have completed diplomas in subjects that have a narrow affinity to university programs. Its findings will be published in a report due out this fall.

Findings of the graduate survey available in print and on the web

The recently published *Findings Report: 1998-99 Ontario Graduate Survey* is now also available on the COU web site (www.cou.on.ca). The survey, which the Ontario Universities' Application Centre conducted from the end of 1998 to spring 1999 through mailed surveys and follow-up telephone contact, asked 1996 graduates of Ontario universities about their employment situation six months and two years after graduation. More than 25,000 surveys were completed, representing 54% of the Class of 1996. The survey found that the overall employment rate for 1996 graduates of undergraduate degree programs, two years after graduation, was 96.7%. Questionnaires for the 1999-2000 survey will be mailed to 1997 graduates the first week in November 1999.

Conference on building competitive city regions scheduled for November

COU, along with the Canadian Urban Institute, the Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario and the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, will be sponsoring a conference, *Building Competitive City Regions in the Knowledge Economy: The Power of Business-Community-Educator Partnerships*, on November 17, 1999. The Hon. David Crombie will chair the conference, and Steve Paikin, host of TVO's *Studio 2*, will act as facilitator. David Lindsay, President and CEO of the Ontario Jobs and Investment Board, and Dr. Paul Davenport, President of The University of Western Ontario, will be among the featured speakers. For registration information on the conference, which will be held at the Mississauga Living Arts Centre, contact the Canadian Urban Institute at (416) 598-1606 ext. 234.

New Chair and members for OPAS Board

Michael Roach, Executive Vice-President and General Manager, CGI, has been appointed the new Chair of the Board of the Office for Partnerships for Advanced Skills (OPAS). CGI is the fastest growing independent information technology consulting firm in Canada; Mr. Roach leads a strategic business unit that focuses on developing and delivering IS/IT solutions to the BCE Group of Companies. His many professional and community service affiliations include NCR Worldwide Telecom Consulting Board of Advisors and Humber River Hospital Foundation Board of Governors. Mr. Roach assumes the chairmanship from Ted Priestner, former CEO of Westinghouse Canada and founding Chair of the OPAS Board, who retired from the position after more than four years. Prof. Bonnie Patterson, President of Trent University and former President of COU, assumes the role of Vice-Chair.

OPAS also welcomed two new members to its Board of Directors: Carol Stephenson, President and CEO, Lucent Technologies Canada Corp.; and Virginia J. Dybenko, Vice-President of Communications, Bell.

Instructors learn about technologies that can enhance their teaching

OPAS, in partnership with TVOntario and IBM, co-sponsored a *Summer Institute on Learning Technologies* on August 10-12, 1999. The three-day institute provided an intensive opportunity for university and college instructors to learn more about technologies that can enhance their teaching. It provided information on a range of possible tools and a hands-on opportunity to develop a learning product. The 16 university instructors were selected to participate by their institution's Vice-President, Academic.

Applications and confirmations for the 1998-99 cycle up from last year's

The Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC) has released its final statistics on application and confirmation (acceptance) volumes for the 1998-99 application cycle ending in September. Total first-year applicants are up 5.1% and total affirmative responses are up 7.5%.

The largest category of undergraduate applicants are those in the Ontario secondary school system seeking admission to first-year university. As of September 23, 1999, a total of 58,092 secondary school candidates submitted applications for admission for the 1998-99 cycle, an increase of 3,208 applicants (or +5.8%) from last year. Of this total, 45,612 accepted offers of admission, up 8.7% from last year. While "confirmation" statistics are a solid preliminary indicator of expected *registration* volumes, these later statistics will be published within the next few weeks.

In the non-secondary category of applicants, a total of 25,412 individuals submitted applications

for first-year fall admission this year, which is an increase of 822 applicants or 3.3% from last year's total.

The largest application volume increase was in the Teacher Education division, with an overall increase of 40% in the number of applicants and 18.8% in the number of acceptances of admission offers. A total of 11,151 individuals submitted applications for admission to the province's one-year teacher-training programs this year, and 6,358 of these have accepted their offer of admission (as of September 20) to one of Ontario's 10 Faculties of Education.

Applications for admission in medicine and law remained relatively constant this year. There were 3,553 applicants competing for admission to the medical schools this year as compared to 3,589 last year. Law school applications numbered 3,413 as compared to 3,391 in September 1998.

OPAS hosts Auto Parts Sector Symposium

On September 22, OPAS and the Auto Parts Manufacturing Association (APMA) hosted an *Auto Parts Sector Symposium*, co-chaired by Dr. Ross Paul, President of the University of Windsor, and Don Amos, Executive Vice-President of Human Resources, Magna International. The symposium brought together representatives from 10 Ontario universities and 11 auto parts manufacturing companies to review and discuss the curriculum of relevant university programs, primarily engineering, as well as to examine the training needs of the current workforce.

The proceedings of this symposium, which is the second sponsored by OPAS, will be published and distributed in October 1999. The sector symposia are a response by OPAS to a recommendation of the COU Task Force on Labour Market Issues, to forge a stronger working relationship between industry and the university community.

Visionary Seminar 2000 to feature Royal Bank's John Cleghorn

On January 25, 2000, OPAS will present its fourth *Visionary Seminar* featuring John Cleghorn, Chairman and CEO of the Royal Bank. The seminar series was designed to bring together faculty, students and local business leaders to hear the views of a prominent visionary on the future of his or her industry. This seminar will enable participants to increase their level of knowledge of the financial services industry, including the types of skills that employers seek. Executive Heads have been asked to confirm that their institution will participate and to nominate a liaison person by October 4, 1999.

Conference on rural medical education scheduled

The first annual medical education conference of the Council of Ontario Faculties of Medicine will take place in Kingston on November 25-26, 1999. The conference, *A Provincial Forum on Rural Medical Education*, will feature the Hon. Elizabeth Witmer, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, as guest speaker.

VISA applications on the rise

Since OUAC introduced an on-line web-based application system to international students in late 1998, over 1,100 international students (or VISA applicants) from 110 different countries have used this system to apply for admission to Ontario universities. This year's total of VISA applicants is up 18.5%, and the number of acceptances of admission offers is up 24.6%. Later this year, this web-based application option will be made available to those applicants outside of Ontario as well as to Ontario applicants.

A new applications process for rehabilitation sciences programs

A new centralized application process for students applying to audiology, speech-language pathology, occupational therapy and physical therapy programs in Ontario universities has been put in place for the 2000 application cycle. The new service – the Ontario Rehabilitation Sciences Programs Application Service (ORPAS) – was developed by the Ontario Council of University Programs in Rehabilitation Sciences and Ontario Universities' Application Centre to provide a more efficient applications process for students and to collect application data for the universities.

Ontario Universities' Fair tops last year's successful turnout

The third annual Ontario Universities' Fair, held this year at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre on September 17, 18 and 19, was another resounding success. More than 38,000 people, primarily from the Greater Toronto Area, attended the fair, up by 3,000 from last year's then record turnout of 35,000. All Ontario's universities were represented at the fair, providing a display booth and scheduled presentations. Organized by the Standing Committee on Secondary School Liaison as part of the University Information Program, the fair enables high school students and their parents to meet with representatives from all the universities, as well as provides them with information and material (as much as they can carry!) on undergraduate programs. One university, alone, distributed over 22,000 of its information handbooks plus an additional 15,000 various faculty publications. Well done!

University honoured for improving gender equity in medical academia

The Council of Ontario Faculties of Medicine awarded the University of Ottawa's Faculty of Medicine with the first May Cohen Gender Equity Award in recognition of outstanding effort or achievement in improving the gender equity environment in medical academic circles in Ontario. The award was presented to Dr. John Seely, former Dean of Medicine at the University of Ottawa, on September 13.

COU publishes quick, easy-to-read "highlights" of major reports

COU has developed a printed series of *Highlights*. Each brochure summarizes the key points of a COU major report for quick, accessible information. To date, there are three *Highlights* brochures for the:

- *Findings Report: 1998-99 Ontario University Graduate Survey*,
- *Ontario Universities – 1998 Resource Document* and
- *Ontario's Students, Ontario's Future*.

All three *Highlights* will also be made available on the new COU web site. If you would like a copy or copies of these brochures, call or e-mail your request to (416) 979-2165 ext. 236 or lsanson@cou.on.ca.

Fall issue of INFO magazine published

The fall issue of INFO magazine has been published and circulated to high schools throughout the province. This year, 250,000 copies were printed to meet the growing needs of both

secondary school students and guidance counsellors to provide general, current information on all of Ontario's universities. The fall issue is also available on the Ontario Universities' Application Centre's web site (www.ouac.on.ca). INFO magazine is published twice annually; the next issue, which is geared for counsellors, will be available in spring 2000. Special acknowledgment goes out to all university admissions/liaison representatives who co-ordinated information for inclusion in the magazine and to editor Barbara Kelly, Public Affairs, COU, and designer/translator Michelle Leblanc, OUAC.

COU web site up and running

COU's new web site (www.cou.on.ca) is now up and running. The expanded web site provides detailed information on the Council's history, membership, committees, affiliates, publications (which can be downloaded and printed) and much more. It also provides links to other important web sites. Be sure to visit the site soon.